Education
April 9, 2008

The following statement was issued by the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education. It was also read in the House of Assembly:

Skills Work for Women Conferences Go Province-Wide

Over the past month, hundreds of Level I female students from throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have participated in *Skills Work for Women Conferences*. Through this program, female students visit a College of the North Atlantic campus, meet a female working in a non-traditional skilled trade, and discuss the many opportunities skilled trades can offer. When this initiative concludes next month, more than 700 students will have been introduced to skilled trades opportunities.

Skills Work for Women Conferences are a partnership between Skills Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Department of Education. I am very pleased to announce, that the Provincial Government is investing $20,000 this year to expand the conferences to Labrador West, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander and Burin.

This is just the latest in a series of initiatives designed to open up the world of skilled trades to women. For example, we are introducing an $11 million skilled trades program in high school and plan to see a 50 per cent female participation rate. Just last fall, we launched a promotional campaign called *Jump Start Your Life*, which is designed to appeal to junior high students, encouraging them to consider a career in the skilled trades.

At the post-secondary level, we have earmarked 66 per cent of the Alberta Centennial Scholarships for women in apprenticeship training. We are in the second year of a contract with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to promote the electrical field to females. We have also been actively working with natural and energy resource-based companies to ensure that women's employment plans are created for all resource development in the province.

Students and parents need to recognize the incredible potential for a successful career in the skilled trades. With numerous upcoming mega-projects on the horizon, the need for qualified skilled workers will only increase. Women can make their mark on these projects and others by pursuing training in any one of 200 skilled trades career options.

I would like to thank the role models who form the backbone of the *Skills Work for Women Conferences*. The role models have become successful career women in their chosen fields. Following their examples, today's young women can become the next generation of women who will change the status quo and make their mark in the skilled trades field.

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